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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING IMMEDIATE 1588
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE 3302
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL IMMEDIATE 8245
RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA IMMEDIATE 7117
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA IMMEDIATE 4365
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA IMMEDIATE 9473
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE IMMEDIATE 0935
RUEHKS/AMCONSUL SAPPORO IMMEDIATE 7629
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SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER HATOYAMA'S FIRST DIET POLICY SPEECH

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11. (U) Summary: Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama delivered his first policy speech to both houses of the Diet on October 26.

He outlined his administration's policies on prominent domestic and international issues such as unemployment and economic recovery, child care allowances, free public high school tuition, pension recordkeeping, greenhouse gas emissions, nuclear nonproliferation, and Japan's ties with the Asia-Pacific region. On topics of particular concern to the United States, the Prime Minister explained more fully what he meant by a "close and equal" relationship between the two countries: a "multilayered alliance in which Japan also proactively proposes the role both countries can play in maintaining global peace and security." Furthermore, without committing to a specific decision, he promised to examine more carefully issues such as realignment of U.S. forces in Japan and contributions related to Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hatoyama also described the wider political ambitions of his administration, comparing steps it is taking to those taken by Meiji Restoration reformers who transformed Japan more than a century ago. End Summary.

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Domestic Concerns
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12. (U) On the first day of the 173rd extraordinary session of the Diet ("rinji kokkai"), Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama addressed a joint session of lawmakers from the Lower and Upper Houses. In the 52-minute address (the longest on record), Hatoyama covered domestic topics, regional and global issues, U.S.-Japan relations, and his administration's larger political philosophy and goals. Although not in great detail, the Prime Minister did touch on the domestic issues voters showed they were most interested in. With regard to unemployment and economic recovery, Hatoyama said his government would adopt emergency economic measures to aide those without jobs and provide support for small and medium-sized companies struggling with the continued economic slump. Hatoyama also reaffirmed his Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)-led administration's pledge to provide child care allowances, make public high school tuition free, and

straighten out the government's sloppy recordkeeping on national pensions.

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Regional and Global Issues
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13. (U) Hatoyama also addressed regional and global issues that were a part of his party's campaign manifesto. He reiterated one of his earliest announcements as prime minister- -to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 25 percent to 1990 levels by 2020- -and added that he would make sure Japan played a leading role in international negotiations on curbing global warming. The Prime Minister also renewed his determination to create a world without nuclear weapons, denuclearize North Korea, seek to resolve the abduction issue using "every conceivable means," and continue promoting the idea of forming an East Asian Community for close regional cooperation in areas such as the economy, trade, and the environment. On the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which he termed one of the "most significant" issues facing the international community today, Hatoyama stated that although he would not "simply" extend the Maritime Self Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean after its expiration in January 2010, Japan would contribute to antiterrorism efforts through agricultural assistance and job training in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Hatoyama also expressed his desire that Japan become a bridge between East and West, industrialized and developing countries, and various cultures.

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Regarding the United States

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14. (U) In his policy address, Hatoyama said that the basis for peace in the Asia-Pacific region would be a "close and equal Japan-U.S. alliance" and described this "close and equal" relationship between the two countries as a "multilayered alliance in which Japan also proactively proposes the role both countries can play in maintaining global peace and security." While the Prime Minister did not commit to a specific policy direction on the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan, he did promise to examine the process that led to the current bilateral agreement on the topic and take into consideration the "burden, pains, and sorrows experienced by the people of Okinawa" before making any decisions.

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Hatoyama's "Bloodless Heisei Restoration"
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15. (U) Hatoyama devoted almost one-fourth of his speech to explaining his concept of "yuai" ("fraternity")-based politics and the larger political ambitions of his administration, which he described as a "bloodless Heisei restoration." Drawing a reference to the Meiji Restoration (also known as the Meiji Revolution or Meiji Reformation)- - a chain of events that led to enormous changes in Japan's political and social structure in the latter half of the 19th century- - Hatoyama vowed to "clean up the postwar administration" through a "180-degree switch" by putting politicians and the people at the helm of policymaking, ending reliance on bureaucrats, and introducing a governing culture that values the lives of individuals and protects their livelihoods. Hatoyama explained his "yuai politics" as one that also "respected the viewpoints of people in vulnerable positions or minority groups," and called on increased volunteerism by individual citizens to help the weak. He also promised that his government would assist such individuals as well as nonprofit organizations involved in social support, in what he deemed to be the "role of 21st century politics."

¶16. (U) An important part of creating a government that truly works for its citizens is eliminating wasteful spending at administrative offices, and towards this end, Hatoyama pledged to "drastically review how tax money is spent and how the national budget is formed," in addition to transforming the country's fiscal structure. Eliminating "amakudari" and "watari" (the practices of retired bureaucrats landing jobs at private-sector companies or government-affiliated organizations that were previously under their jurisdiction) and promoting more disclosure of information are other ways to build a government for the people, which the people can trust. Perhaps to reinforce his point on people's faith in government, Hatoyama offered a rare public apology for having bred public mistrust with his political fund management body's false funds reporting and said he would continue to cooperate fully with prosecutors in their ongoing investigation.

¶17. (U) Another pillar of Hatoyama's "bloodless" revolution mentioned in his speech was regional autonomy, or transferring power to local governments, to allow residents to decide affairs that affect their own areas. An income support system for farming households and a review of postal services are two examples of projects intended to revitalize local communities, according to the Prime Minister.

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Call for Change
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¶18. (U) At 12,905 characters and lasting nearly an hour, Hatoyama's speech was roughly double the length of previous

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prime ministerial addresses to the Diet, as well as the longest in history. Opposition lawmakers called it "redundant," "sentimental," "flowery," and "lacking in details." Several media outlets also pointed to similar deficiencies. Nevertheless, the ambition of Hatoyama's message and its goal to transform Japanese politics was clear: "We are at a crossroads. The real time for change lies ahead. Let us make today the day of commencement."
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